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SUBJECT:MINNESOTA GALLERY ART EXCHANGE

REF: STATE 168716

1. NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES CHAIRMAN JOSEPH DUFFY HAS WRITTEN TO CULTURE MINISTER DEMICHEV EXPLAINING CIRCUMSTANCES OF INDEMNIFICATION PROBLEM AND STRONGLY ENDORSING ART OF RUSSIA EXHIBITION AND MINNESOTA FESTIVAL OF RUSSIAN ARTS. REQUEST EMBASSY CONVEY FOLLOWING LETTER TO DEMICHEV, WITH COPIES TO SHISSLER AND OTHERS NAMED IN TEXT.

(BEGIN TEXT)

THE HONORABLE PETER N. DEMICHEV
MINISTER OF CULTURE
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MINISTERSTVO KULTURII S.S.S.R.
ULITSA KUIBYSHEVA 10
MOSCOW, USSR

DEAR MR. DEMICHEV:

AS CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

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AND OF THE FEDERAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES,

I WRITE TO YOU CONCERNING THE PROPOSED EXHIBITION, "THE ART OF RUSSIA : 1800 - 1850, AND ITS ACCOMPANYING ,FESTIVAL OF RUSSIAN ART" BOTH THE EXHIBITION AND THE FESTIVAL ARE SCHEDULED TO OPEN IN MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL ON OCTOBER 7, 1978 UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA GALLERY AND THE COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION.

THIS PROJECT SO GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE SOVIET UNION HAS, AS YOU KNOW, RECEIVED BROAD AND STRONG SUPPORT IN THE UNITED STATES FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES, THE CULTURAL COMMUNITY OF MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL, AND THE VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES AND MUSEUMS TO WHICH THE EXHIBITION WILL TRAVEL. AFTER PASSING THROUGH A COMPETETIVE NATIONAL REVIEW PROCESS WITHIN THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES, THE PROPOSED EXHIBITION WAS SUPPORTED BY THE ENDOWMENT BY A GRANT OF $ 100,000 FOR WHICH THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA GALLERY WAS REQUIRED TO RAISE AN EQUAL, MATCHING SUM OF MONEY FROM MINNESOTA DONORS. IT HAS BEEN EXTREMELY GRATIFYING TO US AT THE ENDOWMENT TO SEE THE ENORMOUS SUPPORT WHICH THIS PROJECT HAS ENGENDERED IN THE MIDWEST AND TO OBSERVE THE ENTUSIASM WITH WHICH THE COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS THERE HAS BANDED TOGETHER TO CREATE -- WITH
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THE HELP OF SOVIET PERFORMERS, SCHOLARS, DESIGNERS, DANCERS, AND MUSICIANS -- A GENUINE ,FESTIVIAL OF RUSSIAN ARTS." WE REGARD THE EXHIBITION AND ITS ACCOMPANYING FESTIVAL AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN COUNTRIES IN RECENT YEARS.

IT IS, THEREFORE, WITH REGRET THAT I MUST TELL YOU THAT THE FEDERAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES HAS RECENTLY DENIED THE REQUEST OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA GALLERY TO PROVIDE INDEMNIFICATION FOR THIS EXHIBITION THROUGH THE MECHANISM PROVIDED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. THE INDEMNIFICATION LEGISLATION RECENTLY ENACTED BY THE CONGRESS REQUIRES THAT A PANEL OF ART EXPERTS AND MUSEUM DIRECTORS EXAMINE THE EVALUATIONS SET BY THE SENDING SIDE FOR EACH WORK INCLUDED IN ALL EXHIBITIONS COMING FROM ABROAD. THE PANEL MUST THEN ADVISE THE FEDERAL COUNCIL WHETHER EVALUATIONS ARE CONSONANT WITH CURRENT WESTERN MARKET VALUES. ONLY IF THAT IS THE CASE CAN THE FEDERAL COUNCIL UNDERTAKE TO INDEMNIFY THE WORKS INCLUDED IN ANY EXHIBITION.

THE PANEL ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTIES WITH THE EXHIBITION "THE ART OF RUSSIA: 1800-1850." SO FEW WORKS OF COMPARABLE

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QUALITY BY THE ARTISTS INCLUDED IN THE EXHIBITION HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE FOR SALE IN THE WEST IN RECENT YEARS THAT IN A

VERY GENUINE SENSE IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE PANEL TO ESTABLISH A CURRENT MARKET VALUE FOR THE WORKS IN THE SHOW. THE VALUES LISTED BY THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE WERE JUDGED BY THE PANEL OF ART MUSEUM DIRECTORS TO BE TOO HIGH IN COMPARISON WITH THE MOST RECENT SALES PRICES COMMANDED BY RUSSIAN 19TH CENTURY WORKS IN THE WEST. YET, THE PANEL ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT THE WORKS INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED EXHIBITION, IN ANOTHER SENSE, ARE PRICELESS TREASURES OF RUSSIAN ART, CONSTITUTING AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE PATRIMONY OF THE PEOPLE OF THE SOVIET UNION. FACED WITH THIS DILEMNA, SEVERELY CONSTRAINED IN ITS ABILITY TO
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INITIATE ACTION, AND NOT AUTHORIZED BY LAW TO NEGOTIATE ON MATTERS SUCH AS THESE WITH A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT, THE FEDERAL COUNCIL WAS FORCED, REGRETFULLY, TO DENY INDEMNIFICATION COVERAGE TO THIS EXHIBITION.

I WRITE TO CLARIFY THE SOURCE OF THIS DIFFICULTY AND TO SAY HOW STRONGLY WE HOPE THAT THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE WILL BE WILLING TO WORK WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA GALLERY TO FIND A SOLUTION. WE URGE YOUR CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF AN EXCHANGE EXHIBITION WHICH THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA HAS PROPOSED AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF AN EXCHANGE EXHIBITION, EACH SENDING SIDE WOULD INDEMNIFY ITS OWN EXHIBITION WHILE ABROAD. DR. JOSHUA C. TAYLOR, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS, AND BARBARA SHISSLER, REPRESENTING THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA GALLERY AND THE COMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION, HAVE EXPRESSED A STRONG DESIRE TO WORK TOWARD AN EXCHNAGE EXHIBITION COMPARABLE IN SIZE AND QUALITY TO THE "ART OF RUSSIA." SUCH AN EXHIBITION WOULD BE ORGANIZED AROUND A THEME IN AMERICAN ART MUTUALLY AGREED UPON WITH THE SOVIET MINSITRY OF CULTURE.

IF THIS SOLUTION IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO THE MINISTRY, I WOULD URGE THAT BOTH SIDES WORK WITH THE GREATEST POSSIBLE FLEXIBILITY TO FIND AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION. A COMBINATION OF GOVERNMENT INDEMNIFICATION AND PRIVATE INSURANCE MAY, FOR EXAMPLE, BE POSSIBLE, ALTHOUGH I CANNOT SPEAK IN ADVANCE FOR THE FEDERAL COUNCIL. THE ENDOWMENT AND THE FEDERAL COUNCIL ARE AWARE OF THE MANY YEARS OF WORK ON BOTH THE SOVIET AND AMERICAN SIDES WHICH HAVE GONE INTO THE PLANNING AND PREPARATION FOR "THE ART OF RUSSIA: 1800-1850." THE IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS EXHIBITION IN THE
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CULTURAL LIFE OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES ARE TOO GREAT TO LET
EVEN DIFFICULT PROBLEMS DETER ITS FRUITION AND SUCCESS AT
THIS POINT.

MR. MINISTER, I HOPE IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR US TO BECOME
ACQUANITED SOMETIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

YOURS SINCERELY,

JOSEPH DUFFEY
CHAIRMAN

COPIES TO: VICE MINISTER VLADIMIR POPOV
MADAME ALLA BUROVA, CHIEF, WESTERN EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN
DIVISION
MR. NICKOLAI KHALTURIN, CHIEF, FINE ARTS DIVISION
MISS MARILYN JOHNSON, CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICER, AMERICAN
EMBASSY, MOSCOW,
MS. BARBARA SHISSLER, SPECIAL PROJECTS DIRECTOR FOR THE
RUSSIAN EXHIBITION, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA GALLERY

(END TEXT)

2. EMBASSY MAY WISH TO COORDINATE DELIVERY WITH SHISSLER
AND BOWLT, NOW IN MOSCOW FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH MINCULT.

CHRISTOPHER

NNN

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